

## **VOLUME 1, ISSUE 7**

### **LEGISLATIVE EMAIL UPDATE**

Thank you to all of you who take the time to read my "In the Loop" legislative email update. If you have any suggestions or thoughts on any of the information provided or issues of concern to you please contact me or my staff at my toll free number: (866) 262 7307. Your input is more than welcome and always regarded.

### **REPUBLICANS SAY NO TO TAX INCREASES**

By addressing measures that bring equity between non resident and resident tax policy - along with common sense to the Michigan Tax Code, Republican legislators announced this week they are saying no to any tax increases and will ensure that Michigan's tax policies work for Michigan families and businesses and not against them. At a joint news conference conducted in the State Capitol, Senate Finance Committee members and House Tax Policy Committee members announced they are opposed to any tax increases, and will work to pass legislation that includes four legitimate tax policy changes. Among the 15 tax policy changes announced by the administration earlier this year, joint committee members cite 11 as tax increases, with the other four being reasonable tax policy changes. Those changes are intended to create a level playing field between resident and non resident tax policy. House Bills 4566 and 4570 4576 passed out of the Senate Finance Committee and now await consideration by the full Senate.

### **FEDERAL FUNDING FOR MERIT ANNOUNCED**

Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema said Congress' approval of nearly \$706 million in aid to Michigan including \$365 million in addition to Medicaid funding enables the Merit Award Scholarship to continue making a college education more affordable for thousands of Michigan students next year. Senator Sikkema said the federal assistance makes it possible for the Michigan Legislature to fund their budget priorities without raising taxes or resorting to drastic budget cuts. Last week, Senate Republicans outlined their plans to generate more than \$100 million a year through the "Driver Responsibility" and "Claim It Correctly" programs. With the federal government helping Michigan cover Medicaid costs, the pressure to use the Merit Award funding for other purposes no longer exists.

### **NEW HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING POLICY ADOPTED**

The Senate Appropriations Higher Education Subcommittee this week established a new policy for funding higher education in Michigan. As reported from the Senate, House Bill 4396 would establish a \$4,000 floor for higher education at any of the fifteen state-funded universities in Michigan. The budget allocates additional money to bring the four state universities that receive the lowest in

per-student funding, Central Michigan University, Grand Valley State University, Oakland University and Saginaw Valley State University, up to the \$4,000 per student allowance. The Higher Education subcommittee also approved measures in the budget to ensure full funding of the Michigan Merit Award Scholarship Program at \$2,500 and will retain all of the current state financial aid programs for public and independent schools. HB 4396 will be considered by the full Senate Appropriation Committee as early as next week.

### **SHORTER LINES COMING TO SECRETARY OF STATE OFFICES**

Visitors to Secretary of State Offices will soon experience shorter lines with the introduction of employee workstations with new keyboards equipped with magnetic-strip readers. Secretary of State Terri Land announced this week that the equipment will allow employees to scan information carried on the magnetic strip of driver licenses and state identification cards, rather than hold up lines by requiring the information to be typed manually into computer terminals. The tamper-resistant magnetic strips only contain the holder's license number, date of birth and license expiration date, as mandated by state law. More than ten million driver's license and more than one million personal identification cards have been issued since Michigan began using magnetic strips in 1998.

### **DRIVER RESPONSIBILITY LEGISLATION PASSES SENATE**

Michigan's habitually bad drivers will have to pay higher fees to keep their driving privileges and to compensate for the danger they create on state roads under legislation passed by the Senate this week. According to the "Driver Responsibility Program," a driver who racks up seven or more points in a two-year period will be charged with a \$100 financial assessment, and \$50 for each additional point above seven points. Additional assessments will be imposed each year for two years for certain individual violations such as killing or injuring a police officer, alcohol/controlled substance related offenses, driving with an expired license and driving without insurance. Senate Bill 509 now awaits consideration from the House Appropriations Committee.

### **GOP-LED SENATE FINDS \$120 MILLION WITHOUT RAISING TAXES**

Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema announced this week that the Michigan Senate is well on its way to a balanced budget. The Senate adopted four funding proposals by Gov. Granholm and has put forward its own legislation to generate more than \$120 million in much-needed state revenue. Most of the Republican-initiated revenues would be generated by the Michigan Driver Responsibility Program, which assesses additional license fees for habitually bad drivers with seven or more points, and the Claim It Correctly program, which stops property owners from receiving more than one Homestead Property Tax Credit. Senator Sikkema said the Republican initiatives to balance the budget will help the state meet priorities without raising taxes on Michigan's working families.

## **BEACH GROOMING LEGISLATION SIGNED AS PUBLIC ACT 14 OF 2003; PATTERSON PLAYS KEY ROLE**

As the Vice Chair of the Senate Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs, **Senator Patterson** was a vital component in the Senate passing measures that would amend the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to allow for the conduct of beach maintenance activities, without a permit, in areas that are classified as wetlands or as Great Lakes submerged lands. **Patterson's** legal expertise was essential in ensuring that the final version of the bill would not violate existing federal law or produce unforeseen results not intended by the proposed legislation. He was a key component in bringing the Michigan Senate to a compromise. House Bill 4257 is based on testimony taken during Great Lakes Conservation Task Force hearings in 2001. Private property owners who live along the Lake Huron shoreline will now be permitted to take certain steps to groom their beaches during times of low water levels. Beach grooming activities are currently regulated by the Department of Environmental Quality and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Permits that request modest steps to be taken to groom personal beaches on private property have often been declined by the two agencies. The bill passed the Senate 37-0 and 106-1 in the House of Representatives.

## **MICHIGAN RESIDENTS DISCUSS OUT OF STATE TRASH IN NORTHVILLE**

**Senator Patterson wants to thank all of those who attended the joint committee meeting on out-of-state and foreign waste.** He and his fellow state lawmakers came together at a public information hearing to gather opinions from Michigan residents regarding the persistent problem of out-of-state and foreign waste. The second of three hearings was conducted in Northville at Meads Mill Middle School. Approximately 50 businesses and individuals testified to the committee regarding their concerns over the trash imported to Michigan from other states and Canada. Those testifying to the committee included a constitutional law professor from Wayne State University, a senior policy advisor from the Department of Environmental Quality, the Michigan Ecology Center and local businesses and concerned residents. Actively fighting the influx of out-of-state waste into Michigan, **Patterson** recognized the need for action early on. He was the first Senator this year to sponsor legislation regarding out-of-state waste and has more legislation sponsored than any other Senator. Senate Bill 198 would restrict the transport and disposal of waste generated outside the state of Michigan. Senate Bill 505 and Senate Bill 506 would prohibit other states and countries from disposing of their waste in Michigan unless their solid waste stream standards are as stringent as Michigan's standards. The latter two bills would provide Michigan with new standards to protect our landfills from improper disposal of chemicals and products. **Patterson** also sponsored Senate Resolution 4, urging Congress to enact legislation to give states the authority to ban out-of-state waste.

**LOCALS VISIT LANSING**

Parsons Elementary School, 4th Grade Class

Pastor John Losen, wife Vesta, and their 3 grandsons offered the invocation on the Senate floor

**CONCERNED ABOUT A PIECE OF LEGISLATION OR AN ISSUE? DO YOU WANT OTHERS TO SHARE IN YOUR CONCERN?**

If you are interested in sharing your views on any issues, pieces of legislation or a personal topic of interest with your community, please contact Senator Patterson's office at [senbpatterson@senate.michigan.gov](mailto:senbpatterson@senate.michigan.gov) for more information.

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**CONSTITUENT E-MAIL ADDRESSES**

Please feel free to forward this message on to friends and family.

If you need to sign up for my updates, please email me at

[senbpatterson@senate.michigan.gov](mailto:senbpatterson@senate.michigan.gov). In an effort to keep residents up to date with what is happening in Lansing, I am asking interested constituents to forward their e-mail address to me, which will be included in my confidential e mail legislative update list.

Considering the state of the economy, electronic mail is an inexpensive and convenient method to transmit information to those who would be interested in receiving legislative updates. I use constituent e mail addresses for newsletters, weekly updates and to seek input on a variety of issues. You may also visit my website at <http://www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/patterson/>

**Very truly yours,**

**Bruce Patterson**

**State Senator - 7th District**

If you wish to remove your name from my Legislative E-mail Update list, please respond to this message with "remove" as the subject and your name and your

spouse's name (if applicable) in the body of the message. If you have comments, questions, or concerns, please email me at [senbpatterson@senate.michigan.gov](mailto:senbpatterson@senate.michigan.gov) or call my toll free number at (866) 262-7307.